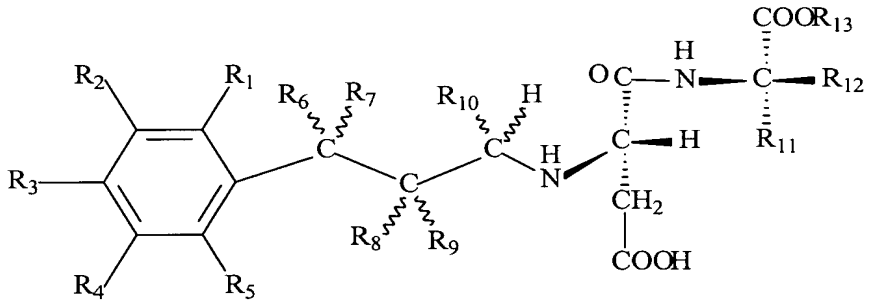
IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): An N-alkylaspartyl dipeptide ester compound, and salts thereof, represented by the formula (1):



wherein R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4 and R_5 are independent from each other, selected from the group consisting of a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group, an alkoxy group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms, an alkyl group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms and a hydroxy alkyloxy group having two or three carbon atoms, and R_1 and R_2, or R_2 and R_3, optionally, form a methylene dioxy group, and R_4 and R_5, and R_1 or R_3 which do not form the methylene dioxy group are defined as above;

R_6, R_7 , R_8, R_9 and R_{10} are independent from each other, a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group with 1 to 3 carbon atoms; and optionally, two of R_6, R_7, R_8, R_9 and R_{10} may combine to form an alkylene group with 1 to 5 carbon atoms, and R_6, R_7, R_8, R_9 and R_{10} which do not

form the alkylene group with 1 to 5 carbon atoms are defined as above;

R_{11} is selected from the group consisting of a hydrogen atom, a benzyl group, a p-hydroxy benzyl group, a cyclohexyl methyl group, a phenyl group, a cyclohexyl group, a phenyl ethyl group and a cyclohexyl ethyl group;

R_{12} is selected from the group consisting of a hydrogen atom and an alkyl group with 1 to 3 carbon atoms; and

R_{13} is selected from the group consisting of alkyl groups with 1 to 4 carbon atoms;

with the proviso that the following are excluded:

where R_6, R_7, R_8, R_9 and R_{10} are hydrogen atoms at the same time,

where R_6 is a methyl group, R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are a hydrogen atom at the same time and R_{11} is a benzyl group or a p-hydroxy benzyl group, at the same time; and

where R_2 or R_4 is a methoxy group, R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_{10} is a methyl group, R_1, R_4 or R_2, R_5, R_6, R_7, R_8 and R_9 are hydrogen atoms at the same time, and R_{11} is a benzyl group or a p-hydroxy benzyl group.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 3 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_3, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl

groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a methoxy group, R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 5 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a methoxyl group, R_3 is a hydroxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and ~~R_{13}~~ $\underline{R_{12}}$ are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups and R_{11} is a p-hydroxy benzyl group.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and ~~R_{13}~~ $\underline{R_{12}}$ are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups and R_{11} is a cyclohexyl methyl group.

Claim 8 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_2, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 9 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_2, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7, and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 10 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a methoxy group, R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 11 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 12 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a methyl group, R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 13 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_6, R_7, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms R_8 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 14 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_1 is a hydroxyl group, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl

groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 15 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_1 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_2, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 16 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_1 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methyl group, R_2, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 17 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 and R_3 combine to form a methylene dioxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 18 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a methyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7, and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 19 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a methyl group, R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 20 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 21 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a methoxy group, R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_7 combine to form a tetramethylene group, R_{11} is a benzyl group, and R_{13} is a methyl group.

Claim 22 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_7 are methyl groups, R_{11} is a benzyl group, and R_{13} is an ethyl group.

Claim 23 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9 and R_{10} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7, R_{12} and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 24 (Currently Amended): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_2 and R_3 ~~is a~~ are hydroxyl ~~group~~ groups, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein when R_6 and R_7 differ, the carbon atom to which R_6 is linked in said formula is in the (R), (S)

or (RS) configuration.

Claim 26 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein when R_8 and R_9 differ, the carbon atom to which R_8 is linked is in the (R), (S) or (RS) configuration.

Claim 27 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 13, wherein when R_8 and R_9 differ the carbon atom to which R_8 is linked is in the (R), (S) or (RS) configuration.

Claim 28 (Original): The compound as defined in claim 1, wherein when R_{10} is a substituent other than a hydrogen atom, the configuration of the carbon atom to which R_{10} is linked in said formula (1) is in the (R), (S) or (RS) configuration.

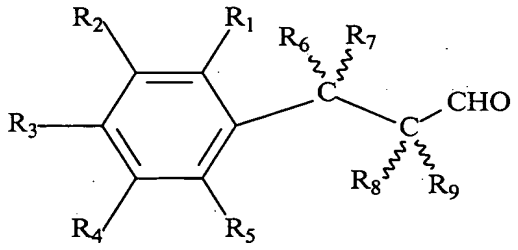
Claim 29 (Original): A composition comprising at least one compound of claim 1 and a carrier or bulking agent.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): A method of imparting sweetness into a substance comprising adding at least one compound of claim 1 to said substance, wherein said substance is selected from the group consisting of a food item, a beverage, a soft-drink, a fruit juice, a tea, water, a confectionery, chewing gum, a hygiene product, a toiletry, a cosmetic, a pharmaceutical product and a veterinary product.

Claim 31 (Currently Amended): A method of producing ~~the~~ a compound as defined

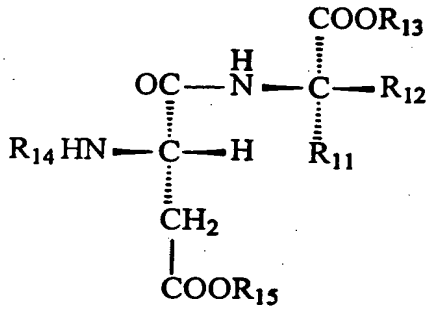
in claim 1, wherein R_{10} is a hydrogen atom comprising:

reacting under reductive alkylation conditions an aldehyde having the formula (2):



(2)

wherein R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5, R_6, R_7, R_8 and R_9 have the same meanings as R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5, R_6, R_7, R_8 and R_9, respectively in the above formula (1), with an aspartame compound having the formula (3):



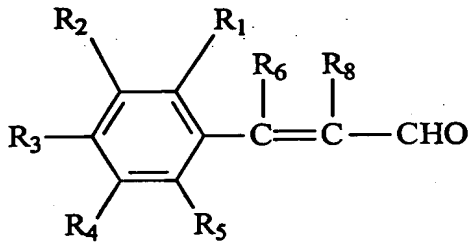
(3)

wherein R_{11}, R_{12} and R_{13} in formula (3) have the same meanings as R_{11}, R_{12} and R_{13} in formula (1), R_{14} is a hydrogen atom or a substituent which can be converted into a hydrogen atom and R_{15} is a hydrogen atom, benzyl group or a substituent which may be used to protect a carboxyl group.

Claim 32 (Original): The method as defined in claim 1, wherein R_{15} is a t-butyl group.

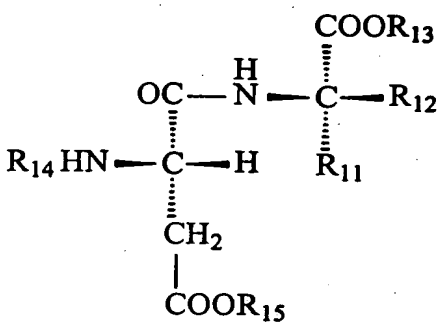
Claim 33 (Currently Amended): A method of producing ~~the~~ a compound as defined in claim 1, wherein R_7, R_9 and R_{10} are a hydrogen atom comprising:

reacting under reductive alkylation conditions an aldehyde having the formula (4):



(4)

with an aspartame compound having the formula (3):

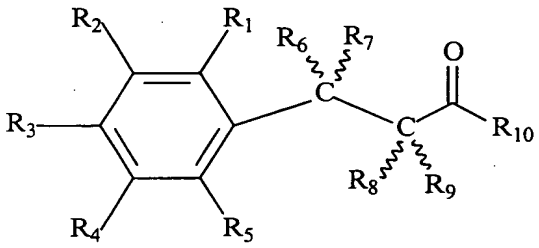


(3)

wherein R_{11}, R_{12} and R_{13} in formula (3) have the same meanings as R_{11}, R_{12} and R_{13} in formula (1), R_{14} is a hydrogen atom or a substituent which can be converted into a hydrogen atom and R_{15} is a hydrogen atom, benzyl group or a substituent which may be used to protect a carboxyl group.

Claim 34 (Currently Amended): A method of producing ~~the~~ a compound as defined in claim 1, comprising:

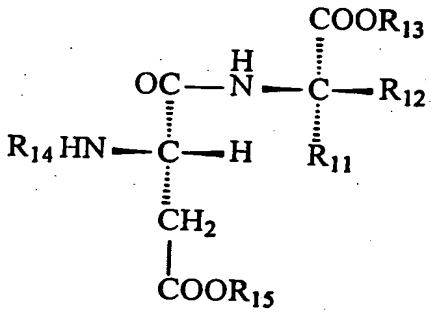
reacting under reductive alkylation conditions an aldehyde having the formula (5):



(5)

wherein R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5, R_6, R_7, R_8, R_9 and R_{10} have the same meanings as R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5, R_6, R_7, R_8, R_9 and R_{10}, respectively in formula (1);

with an aspartame compound having the formula (3):



(3)

wherein R_{11}, R_{12} and R_{13} in formula (3) have the same meanings as R_{11}, R_{12} and R_{13} in formula (1), R_{14} is a hydrogen atom or a substituent which can be converted into a hydrogen atom and R_{15} is a hydrogen atom, benzyl group or a substituent which may be used to protect a carboxyl group.

Claim 35 (Previously Presented): The composition according to Claim 29, wherein said carrier or bulking agent is one or more compounds selected from the group consisting of polydextrose, starch, maltodextrines, cellulose, methylcellulose, carboxymethylcellulose and other cellulose compounds, sodium alginate, pectins, gums, lactose, maltose, glucose, sucrose, leucine, glycerole, mannitol, sorbitol, xylitol, and erythritol.

Claim 36 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_2,

R_3, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 37 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_3, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 38 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a methoxy group, R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 39 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 40 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a methoxyl group, R_3 is a hydroxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups and R_{11} is a p-hydroxy benzyl group.

Claim 41 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups and R_{11} is a cyclohexyl methyl group.

Claim 42 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_2, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 43 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_2, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7, and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 44 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a methoxy group, R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 45 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 46 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a methyl group, R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_7, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 47 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a

methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_6, R_7, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms R_8 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 48 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_1 is a hydroxyl group, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 49 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_1 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_2, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 50 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_1 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methyl group, R_2, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 51 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 and R_3 combine to form a methylene dioxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 52 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a methyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7, and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 53 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a methyl group, R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 54 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl group, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 55 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a methoxy group, R_3 is a hydroxyl group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_7 combine to form a tetramethylene group, R_{11} is a benzyl group, and R_{13} is a methyl group.

Claim 56 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6 and R_7 are methyl groups, R_{11} is a benzyl group, and R_{13} is an ethyl group.

Claim 57 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 is a hydroxyl group, R_3 is a methoxy group, R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9 and R_{10} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7, R_{12} and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 58 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein R_2 and R_3 are hydroxyl groups,

R_1, R_4, R_5, R_8, R_9, R_{10} and R_{12} are hydrogen atoms, R_6, R_7 and R_{13} are methyl groups, and R_{11} is a benzyl group.

Claim 59 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein when R_6 and R_7 differ, the carbon atom to which R_6 is linked in said formula is in the (R), (S) or (RS) configuration.

Claim 60 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein when R_8 and R_9 differ, the carbon atom to which R_8 is linked is in the (R), (S) or (RS) configuration.

Claim 61 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein when R_8 and R_9 differ the carbon atom to which R_8 is linked is in the (R), (S) or (RS) configuration.

Claim 62 (New): The method of claim 34, wherein when R_{10} is a substituent other than a hydrogen atom, the configuration of the carbon atom to which R_{10} is linked in said formula (1) is in the (R), (S) or (RS) configuration.